

AbstractID: 4905 Title: Intellectual Property

Every medically-oriented scientific journal is confronted with a fundamental conflict. The journal exists for the purpose of disseminating information produced by authors to others who may be able to use the information to enhance their own research, education programs or clinical practices. Journals and the information they disseminate contribute in a substantial way to progress in science, education and the clinical practice of medicine. Articles published in a legitimate scientific journal have high credibility because they are from identified authors, are peer-reviewed, and are integrated within the literature related to the topics of the articles. The conflict in this process arises because articles contain information that belongs to the authors and the authors' institutions, and may represent intellectual property that will ultimately be marketed commercially. The journal has an obligation to protect this property and its potential value to the authors and institutions. This protection is provided by the journal's copyright over the information. When this protection is compromised by plagiarism of the article's information by another author, the journal must be prepared to act through enactment of a plagiarism policy approved, in the case of Medical Physics, by the journal's Board of Editors and by the sponsoring society (American Association of Physicists in Medicine). It is possible for authors to plagiarize their own work, through duplicate publication in more than one journal. For this purpose, Medical Physics requires submission of a Conflict of Interest statement that includes disclosure of an article's publication elsewhere before submission to Medical Physics.